



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TRANSPORTATION CRACKDOWN SEEKS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE** *CHILD CARE AGENCIES WARNED--THE HEAT IS ON*

NASHVILLE-- The Tennessee Department of Human Services is beginning its annual summer crackdown on licensed child care agencies that transport children. Last summer, more than 700 visits were made across the state, revealing serious licensing violations that put children at extreme risk. More than one hundred agencies were cited for violations that ranged from no transportation training to leaving children unattended in vehicles. Fifteen agencies voluntarily suspended their license to transport children and nearly 100 agencies were "Put on Notice" for violations.

"The inspection process works both to identify problems and prevent potential tragedies," said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. "As the weather warms up, child care providers must be even more cautious if they choose to transport children. This stepped up enforcement is necessary. We can't take any chances when it comes to the health and safety of Tennessee's children."

Licensing counselors will make surprise inspections and conduct surveillance at child care agencies that offer transportation. They will also check up on providers who are taking the children on field trips. Human Services licenses 3,700 child care agencies in Tennessee, and approximately 950 of them offer transportation. Those providers are receiving letters in the mail this week reminding them of the potential dangers that are involved while transporting young children.

Extreme temperatures cause many health risks for children, such as: sunburn, heatstroke, dehydration, brain damage, and even death. When left in a hot vehicle, a young child's core body temperature may increase three to five times faster than that of an adult.

Since 1997, four Memphis children have lost their lives after being forgotten in their child care vans. A baby in Shelby County died last summer and another died in Davidson County in 2003 after being left in their parents' vehicles in front of their child care centers.

If you witness a child being left unattended in a child care vehicle, dial 911 for immediate assistance. For other transportation safety violations please call the Human Services Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261--that's 1-800-GO2VAN1 (Go to the back of the van and check the children--it's the number one priority). For more information on child care licensing, visit <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/childcare.htm>.

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